ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An airborne search and rescue scanner is provided to locate a missing person wearing a reflector for reflecting laser energy emitted from a scanner in a high speed aircraft. The scanner and reflector combination enable scanning of a large search area in a relatively short time period. The system is designed to prevent false readings, as for example, sun glint reflected by the reflector, or false alarms resulting from reflections from the terrain being searched and not the reflector worn by the missing person. In an alternative embodiment of the invention, the active laser scanning system is replaced by a passive infrared scanner by replacing the laser scanner with an infrared detector. In this embodiment, it is not necessary for the missing person to wear a reflector.